

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-10

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S/NM FOR AMBASSADOR VANCE

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TAGS: SNAR BM

SUBJ: NARCOTICS: FUTURE HELICOPTER DELIVERIES

1. IT IS MISSION VIEW THAT THE GUB HAS EVERY INTENTION TO UTILIZE USG SUPPLIED HELICOPTERS, FOUR OF WHICH HAVE JUST ARRIVED, PRIMARILY AND ESSENTIALLY FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS PURPOSES. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT GUB IS MOST SERIOUS ABOUT COMBATTING NARCOTICS AND THAT THE HELICOPTERS WILL BE INTEGRAL PART OF THAT FIGHT. GUB HAS RESPONDED WITH ENTHUSIASM TO ALL ASPECTS OF HELICOPTER PACKAGE; US TRAINERS AND TECHS HERE HAVE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH EAGERNESS AND ABILITY OF BURMESE TO COPE WITH TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF OPERATING THE AIRCRAFT AND SIMILAR RESPONSES HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM TRAINERS OF THE BURMESE TECHNICIANS NOW IN THE US. THE UNPRECEDENTED VISIT BY COL. AUNG HTAY AND PARTY IS ANOTHER DEMONSTRATION OF GUB WILLINGNESS TO PLACE ANTI-NARCOTICS IN A PRIORITY POSITION; IT MAY ALSO HAVE BROKEN A LOGJAM SINCE BURMESE CUSTOMS HAVE RECENTLY INQUIRED ABOUT ATTENDING US CUSTOMS-DIRECTED PROGRAMS IN THE US. ON THE ACTION SIDE, GUB IS DEMONSTRATING ITS EARNESTNESS IN CURTAILING PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF ILLICIT DRUGS IN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN LOCALES. IN LAST TWO WEEKS ALONE, SIGNIFICANT HEROIN SEIZURES HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED IN SEVERAL UPPER BURMA CITIES AND A REFINERY CAPABLE OF PRODUCING LARGE QUANTITIES

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OF HEROIN WAS RAIDED BY BURMA ARMY, RESULTING IN SEIZURE OF

EQUIPMENT, CHEMICALS, AND ARREST OF FOUR OPERATORS. THESE ARE ONLY EXAMPLES OF ALMOST DAILY ANTI-NARCOTICS ACTIONS BY POLICE AND ARMY; IT IS SELF-EVIDENT THAT HELICOPTERS WILL GREATLY ENHANCE EFFORTS. THERE IS EVIDENCE TOO THAT THE GUB IS BECOMING MORE WILLING TO PUBLICIZE ITS SUCCESSES AS EVIDENCED BY RECENT PRESS STORIES OFFERING STATISTICS OF NARCOTICS SEIZED (SEE WEEKA 24, ITEM 4).

2. FOREGOING PROVIDES VERY STRONG CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF GUB BONA FIDE INTEREST TO UTILIZE FIRST INCREMENT OF HELICOPTERS PRIMARILY FOR NARCOTICS CONTROL, AND MAKES IT DESIRABLE TO ELIMINATE ANY UNNECESSARY DELAY IN DELIVERING SECOND AND THIRD INCREMENTS. PROLONGED DELAY IN ORDERING SUBSEQUENT HELICOPTERS, SUCH AS WOULD BE CAUSED BY HOLDING UP ORDERS OF SECOND GROUP PENDING FULL DRESS REVIEW AND CRITIQUE OF USE OF THE FIRST BATCH COULD WELL DELAY ARRIVAL OF NEXT SIX OR MORE HELICOPTERS UNTIL MID-76 OR LATER. GUB SELF-INTEREST IS VERY STRONGLY ON OUR SIDE, SINCE THEY KNOW THAT WE WILL LOOK CRITICALLY AT THE RECORD OF HELICOPTER UTILIZATION. THUS, TO AVOID UNDUE DELIVERY DELAY, WE RECOMMEND ORDER BE PLACED FOR NEXT INCREMENT OF HELICOPTERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, NOT ONLY TO REDUCE TIME GAP, BUT ALSO TO DEMONSTRATE TO THE BURMESE OUR GOOD FAITH, FURTHER LOCKING THEM IN ON THE COURSE OF COOPERATION WITH US IN THIS VITAL FIELD.

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